

*Beniston*

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Dear Josh,

Thanks so much for the update - especially the pictures. I had seen the one of you somewhere in a textbook, looking very pensive and wise, but think that with such a cheery-looking wife, and with kids around, life must be a lot more joyful now. I hope that all your awesome responsibilities do not prevent that. In comparison, my own career looks almost trivial, but anyway I enclose the cv you asked for. There are no new publications, which is probably the knell of doom, but one must start somewhere. After all, the job description does say "potentiality". Your letter was a ray of hope in a depressing time: end-of-term teaching duties were complicated by three rounds of a respiratory 'flu bug in 7 weeks (guess I'm lysogenic or something!) and then the committee jumped on me because the references were not all in. Stocker's arrived a few hours later!

As to your point that I should have more "proximate" references, I couldn't agree more. But since the locals are involved in choosing the candidates, they don't want to get involved in the letter-writing, and are not exactly qualified to do so, anyway, since they want geneticists writing. The basic problem is that I knocked off for a couple of decades + to raise a family and was not doing any genetics all that while except the homegrown stuff. And since Alec's death it has just been lectureships here at UWM where the job is, so that is why I come haunting you out of the past for a letter.

Regarding lost files - shortly after I came to Madison (the first year full time as your "executive housekeeper", I believe you put it) you wanted me to do some photographic work but some of the bits and pieces were missing and nowhere to be found. Then you expounded your Theory of Lost Things: "if something is hopelessly lost, chances are you're looking for the wrong container." Lo! An old agar can on the top shelf of the darkroom was found to contain the lost articles! Maybe your old files are in Madison still, or in an old agar can, or???? One thing you had me on for awhile was Weed's copper phenomenon. I think you were reviewing a paper of his and wanted to see for yourself. I recall tiny colonies, and sprawling murky mucoid colonies, and unbelievable frustration because nothing ever seemed to come out twice the same.

What I was most interested in was genetics of different mating types, and finding that while recombination occurred within and between most of the E.coli strains I looked at, the mechanisms seemed to vary from strain to strain, and that is what I ended up with for my thesis in London. Does that refresh your recollection? Any sort of positive statement you can make to the committee will be much appreciated. Because of some of the children's unusual educational needs, I am not really able to leave here for just any job, and there is not a great probability that another genetics job will turn up locally any time soon (unless I create one). So I am really hoping this turns out well, and am very grateful for your assistance.

Thanks,

*Helm*

*enc. cv*